



Finland, reservists up to 65 years: a strategic choice to strengthen national defense

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Finland takes a new and significant step in strengthening its defensive posture. President **Alexander Stubb** has signed a law that raises the age limit for service in the military reserve to 65 years. The reform will come into effect on **January 1, 2026** and aims to substantially expand the country's mobilization capacity.

What changes with the new law

According to the Ministry of Defense, the amendment extends the period of stay in the reserve:

- **by 15 years** for ordinary soldiers
- **by 5 years** for officers and non-commissioned officers

The new regulation also establishes a uniform principle: **all conscripted soldiers will remain in the reserve until the end of the year in which they turn 65**, regardless of their rank.

One million reservists by 2031

Defense Minister **Antti Häkkinen** explained that the impact of the reform will be gradual but significant. In the first five years of implementation, an increase of about **125,000 reservists** is expected, while the strategic goal is to reach **a total reserve of about one million people by 2031**.

A critical mass that, in the government's intentions, directly strengthens Finland's deterrence and response capability in case of crisis. "Strengthening the reserve increases Finland's defense capability," Häkkinen emphasized.

The new security context

The decision is part of a profoundly changed geopolitical framework. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Finland abandoned its historic neutrality and officially joined **NATO** in April 2023.

Since then, Helsinki has adopted a series of extraordinary security measures, motivated by the growing pressure along the eastern border.

Border with Russia: closure and physical barrier

In November 2023, the Finnish government decided to close the land border with Russia, to counter what the authorities have described as a direct and organized migration, interpreted as a form of hybrid operation.

In parallel, the construction of a **fence about 200 kilometers long** along the Russian-Finnish border has begun, with completion expected by 2026. An infrastructure that complements military reforms and the modernization of the armed forces.

A defense based on national resilience

The extension of the reservists' age confirms a typically Finnish defensive model: **territorial defense, broad mobilization of the population, and strong integration between the**

armed forces and civil society. In a Europe increasingly marked by the return of state competition, Helsinki chooses to invest in the strategic depth of its reserve, transforming experience and continuity of service into a security multiplier.

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